

skin diver

Volume Thirty-four Number Four

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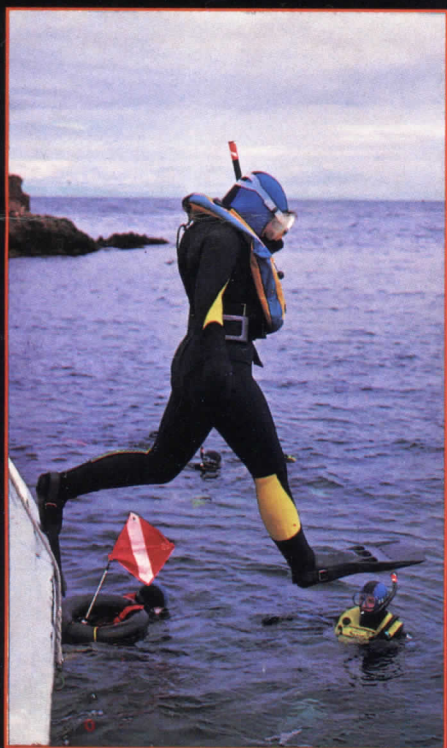
Porcupinefish can swell up like spiny Christmas tree ornaments when disturbed, making the creature look very unappetizing to potential predators. Found in warm waters worldwide, these fish are just one of many species occurring in the Caribbean areas featured in this issue. Photo/Geri Murphy.

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California **Channel Islands** **Santa Barbara to San Diego**



Premier Special Section



California Channel Islands...

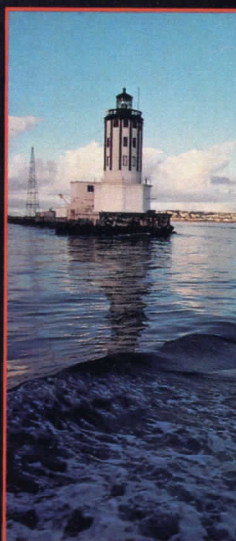
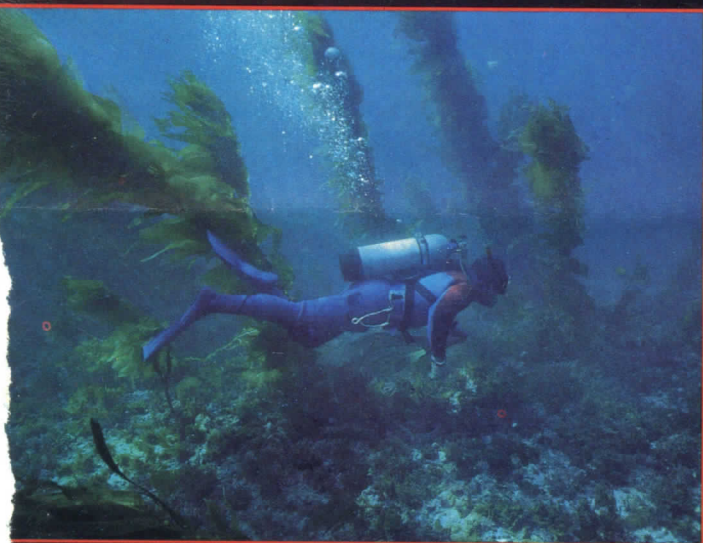
When I came to California, I knew there was one island off its coast—Catalina. It wasn't until I became a diver I found out there were seven more. And, not only were all eight islands diveable, so were several pinnacles, large rocks and reefs off their shores. I started diving at Catalina and Santa Cruz. Santa Barbara, Santa Rosa and Anacapa merely whetted my diving appetite for Farnsworth and Cortes Banks, San Nicolas,

San Miguel and San Clemente. Somewhere along the line I visited Bird, Ship, Begg and Wilson Rocks. During my early diving days I looked for shells and collected game: abalone, scallops, lobster. I even tried spearfishing.

Five years ago I took up U/W photography and four years ago I was introduced to wreck diving. The *Valiant*, *Gregory*, *Butler*, *Koka* and *Winfield Scott* were added to my diving vocabulary.

The point of this dissertation on my diving career is the incredible variety California diving offers. Is there any kind of diving we don't do? Well, yes, since our ocean waters never freeze, we don't ice dive! And, we don't really have tropical diving. Although El Nino has produced water temperatures of 74°F, that is unusual. The norm is water ranging from 54°F (during the winter) to 64°F (in the summer). Air temperatures are generally

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE



The eight California Channel Islands offer something for almost every diver: wrecks; colorful macro and wide angle photo subjects; game such as abalone, lobster and scallops; and scenic kelp forests. Since the islands are anywhere from 11 to 70 miles from the coast, the diving is mostly done off charter boats.



An Offshore Wonderland Of Diving Adventure

in the 60s-80s during the day year-round.

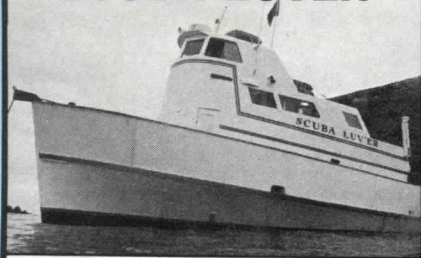
GETTING THERE

Since the nearest Channel Island (Anacapa) is 11 miles from the mainland and the farthest (San Nicolas), about 70, with the exception of Catalina, these islands may be dived only from boats. And, the vast majority of divers travel to the islands aboard charter dive boats. There are more than 20 of these, leaving from

four locations: Santa Barbara, Oxnard/Ventura, San Pedro and San Diego. They are well-equipped, live-aboard type boats for the most part, ranging in size from Truth Aquatics' new 90 foot luxury vessel (to be in service this summer) to the very comfortable *Charisma* and *Conception* (both 80 feet long) to the 42 foot *Barbara Marie*. The *Peace*, 65 feet long, even has a saltwater spa! With a couple of exceptions, most boats have compressors; gal-

leys that serve hot meals; heads and showers; bunks with pillows and blankets. The larger boats carry 25 to 35 divers; two smaller boats, the *Moonraker* and *Excalibur*, cater to groups of six or less. The captains and crews of all the vessels are conscientious, experienced boat handlers and most are divers as well. If your group has a particular objective in mind, such as ab collecting or macro photography, let the captain know

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Channel Islands

and he will do his best to put you where you want to be.

While trips to Catalina and Anacapa usually leave early in the morning, trips to the outer islands leave the night before, traveling while you sleep.

Diving in California is a bargain. The least expensive boat trips, to Catalina or Anacapa, cost about \$30; air and food are extra. The most expensive trips, to San Nick, for example, cost about \$50, with air and food extra. You will get at least five hours of diving and the boats move frequently, offering you a variety of sites to choose from. The larger boats offer multi-day trips. For about \$75 per day you get almost unlimited diving with all food, air and non-alcoholic beverages included. The San Diego boats also include weightbelts and tanks.

THE NORTHERN ISLANDS

Of the eight islands, Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel are called the Northern Channel Islands. Along with Santa Barbara, they comprise the Channel Islands National Park. Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa are privately owned; the other three islands are owned by the federal government.

The waters for one mile around each of the National Park islands are an ecological preserve. This means you may not take anything that isn't covered by California Fish and Game Laws.

The Channel Islands National Park Headquarters, at 1901 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura, (805) 644-8262, is well worth a visit. There are interesting exhibits on the islands' history and marine life and a movie about them. Books, postcards and slides are for sale.

ANACAPA

Anacapa is the island closest to the California coastline, just 11 miles from Oxnard, 25 from the city of Santa Barbara. Almost five miles long, it is actually three separate islands: East, Middle and West. Most of the northeast side of Anacapa is closed to game taking. **Gold Fish Bowl**, off West Anacapa, is a good site for beginners, with waters averaging 30 feet deep. Truth Aquatics' skipper, Terry Hite, calls **Coral Reef**, on the south side of the same island, "a Wykoff Ledge for beginners." It features a wall dropping from 30 to 100 feet. It should be dived only under the best of conditions: Watch for currents. Further east is **Cat Rock**, featuring tumbled boulders and ledges down to 70 feet.

The wreck of the **Winfield Scott** is near the northeast end of Middle Anacapa. This paddlewheel mail steamer went down in 1853 taking with it a fortune in gold, most of which was salvaged. A number of gold coins were found in the 1960s. Now, however, removing even as much as a nail will get you into trouble



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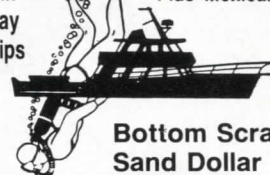
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1985 TRIP SCHEDULE

1985 DATES ABOARD CONCEPTION

| When | Who | Phone |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| May 3 & 4 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unlimited | 415-283-8343 |
| 5 & 6 | Wet Pleasure | 408-984-5819 |
| 10-11-12 | Marin Skin Diving | 415-479-4332 |
| 17-18-19 | Adventure Sports | 408-423-3648 |
| 20-21-22-23-24 | Cal. Academy of Sciences | 415-668-7376 |
| 25-26-27 | Blue Fins Dive Club | 213-391-0948 |
| 30 & 31 | U.C. Santa Cruz | 408-475-9446 |
| June 1-2-3 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 7 & 8 | Aqua Adventures Unlimited | 818-980-1271 |
| 9 & 10 | Wet Pleasure | 408-984-5819 |
| 14 & 15 | Bamboo Reef | 415-362-6694 |
| 16 & 17 | Aloha Diving Schools | 818-343-6343 |
| 18-19-20 | Divers West | 818-796-4287 |
| 21-22-23 | San Francisco U/W Photo Soc. | 415-276-5694 |
| 28-29-30 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unlimited | 415-283-8343 |
| July 4-5-6 | Lodi Skin Diving | 209-333-2343 |
| 7 & 8 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 13-14-15 | Glendale I.D.S. | 213-320-1681 |
| 19 & 20 | San Diego U/W Photo Soc. | 619-277-6363 |
| 21 & 22 | Desert Divers | 702-438-1000 |
| 25-26-27 | New England Divers | 415-434-3614 |
| 28 & 29 | Open Water Habitat | 714-633-7283 |
| Aug. 1-2-3 | Marin Skin Diving | 415-479-4332 |
| 4-5-6 | Jumbo Reef Enterprises | 408-427-1343 |
| 8-9-10 | Bamboo Reef | 415-362-6694 |
| 11-12-13-14 | Ocean Odyssey | 408-475-3483 |
| 15-16-17-18 | Stan's Skin Diving Shop | 408-998-0767 |
| 19 thru 23 | Bottom Timers | 206-573-7563 |
| 24 | Discovery Charters | 213-790-8276 |
| 25 & 26 | Wet Pleasure | 408-984-5819 |
| 27-28-29 | Divers West | 818-796-4287 |
| 31st thru Sept. 2 | Aqua Adventures Unltd. | 818-342-4170 |
| Sept. 6-7-8 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 13 & 14 | Discovery Charters | 818-790-2717 |
| 15 & 16 | Pinnacles Dive Center | 415-897-9962 |
| 20 & 21 | Tom Campbell | 805-965-4901 |
| 22 & 23 | Wet Pleasure | 408-984-5819 |
| 26-27-28 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 29 & 30 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unlimited | 415-283-8343 |
| Oct. 2-3-4-5 | Ocean Odyssey | 408-475-3483 |
| 6-7-8 | Discovery Charters | 818-790-2717 |
| 9 & 10 | Any Water Sports | 408-244-4435 |
| 11 & 12 | Desert Divers | 702-438-1000 |
| 13-14-15 | Lodi Skin Diving | 209-333-2343 |
| 17-18-19 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 20 & 21 | Wet Pleasure | 408-984-5819 |
| 24-25-26 | Neptune's Realm | 707-445-3701 |
| 27 & 28 | Tom Campbell Group | 805-965-4901 |
| Nov. 1 & 2 | Aqua Adventures Unltd. | 818-342-4170 |
| 3 & 4 | Glendale I.D.S. | 213-320-1681 |
| 7-8-9 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 10 & 11 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 15 & 16 | L.A. U/W Photo Society | 818-790-3991 |
| 17-18-19 | Inter-Ocean Tours | 415-444-5833 |
| 21-22-23 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 24 & 25 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 26 & 27 | U.C. Santa Cruz | 408-462-5409 |
| 28-29-30 | Aqua Adventures Unltd. | 818-980-1271 |
| Dec. 6-7-8 | Stu's Scubaventures | 415-283-8343 |
| 13 & 14 | Dave Faught | 408-371-4541 |
| 27-28-29 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |

1985 MULTI-DAY TRIPS ABOARD TRUTH

| When | Who | Phone |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| May 3 & 4 | Pinnacles Dive Center | 415-897-9962 |
| 5 & 6 | Aloha Diving Schools | 818-343-6343 |
| 10 & 11 | Aqua Adventures Unlimited | 818-980-1271 |
| 17-18-19 | Aquarius Dive Shop | 408-375-1933 |
| 25-26-27 | Ocean Odyssey | 408-475-3483 |
| June 1-2-3 | Flipper Dippers | 408-446-1908 |
| 7-8-9 | Aquarius Dive Shop | 408-375-1933 |
| 14 & 15 | Dave Faught | 408-371-4571 |
| 21-22-23 | Sea Sabers | 714-738-4333 |
| 29 & 30 | Any Water Sports | 408-244-4435 |
| July 4-5-6 | Aqua Adventures Unltd. | 818-342-4170 |
| 7 & 8 | Salt Water Revival | 415-525-6229 |
| 14 & 15 | Divers Corner | 213-927-1417 |
| 19 & 20 | Discovery Charters | 213-790-2717 |
| 21 & 22 | Open Water Habitat | 714-633-7283 |
| 25-26-27 | San Francisco Reef Divers | 415-487-6394 |
| 28 & 29 | Any Water Sports | 408-244-4435 |
| Aug. 2 & 3 | Aqua Adventures Unltd. | 818-342-4170 |
| 4-5-6-7 | Dave Faught | 408-371-4541 |
| 9 & 10 | Sea Sabers | 714-544-1853 |
| 11 & 12 | Aloha Diving School | 818-846-1320 |
| 16 & 17 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 23 & 24 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 25-26-27-28-29 | Boulder Scuba Tours | 303-449-8606 |
| 31st-Sept. 1-2 | Blue Fins Dive Club | 213-391-0948 |
| Sept. 6 & 7 | Hughes & TRW Scuba Clubs | 213-823-2552 |
| 13 & 14 | Sea Sons Dive Club | 714-829-7155 |
| 15-16-17 | New England Divers | 415-434-3614 |
| 20 & 21 | Cypress College | 714-553-1889 |
| 22 & 23 | Divers Corner | 213-927-1417 |
| 29 | Blue Fins Dive Club | 213-391-0948 |
| Oct. 2 & 3 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 4 & 5 | Sea Sons Dive Club | 714-829-7155 |
| 6 & 7 | Saltwater Revival | 415-525-6229 |
| 8-9-10 | Ron Barney | 415-388-8124 |
| 11 & 12 | Aqua Adventures Unltd. | 818-342-4170 |
| 13-14-15 | Aquarius Dive Shop | 408-375-1933 |
| 18 & 19 | Tritonians Dive Club | 415-494-1628 |
| 20 & 21 | Blue Fin Dive Club | 213-991-0261 |
| 25 & 26 | Sea Urchins | 408-722-6744 |
| 27-28-29 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| Nov. 1-2-3 | Sea Sabers Dive Club | 714-544-1853 |
| 7-8-9 | Dolphin Scuba Diving | 916-929-8188 |
| 10 & 11 | Hughes & TRW Scuba Club | 213-607-1005 |
| 15 & 16 | John Larson | 415-435-0523 |
| 17 & 18 | Stu's Scuba Tours | 415-283-8343 |
| 22 & 23 | Pacific Offshore | 408-294-7634 |
| 28-29-30 | Desert Divers | 702-438-1000 |
| | Mid West Divers | 303-484-8528 |
| Dec. 14 & 15 | Any Water Sports | 408-244-4435 |

1985 MULTI-DAY TRIPS ABOARD THE NEW BOAT

| When | Who | Phone |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| June 16-17-18 | Dolphin Scuba Diving | 916-929-8188 |
| 20-21-22 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unlimited | 415-283-8343 |
| 23 & 24 | Sports Cove | 707-448-9454 |
| | Trivally Scuba | 415-828-5040 |
| 28 & 29 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unlimited | 415-283-8343 |
| 30 thru July 3 | Adventure Sports | 408-458-3648 |
| July 4-5-6-7 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 12 & 13 | Tom Campbell Group | 805-965-4901 |
| 14 & 15 | Aloha Diving School | 818-343-6343 |
| 18-19-20 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 21 & 22 | Wet Pleasure | 408-984-5819 |
| 25-26-27 | Inter-Ocean Tours | 415-444-5833 |
| 28 & 29 | Bamboo Reef | 415-362-6694 |
| Aug. 1-2-3-4 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 8-9-10 | Bottom Time | 916-885-FROG |
| 11 & 12 | Water Pro | 805-543-3483 |
| 13 thru 17 | Aquatic Center | 714-650-5440 |
| 18 & 19 | Tom Campbell Group | 805-965-4901 |
| 20 thru 24 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 25 thru 29 | Malibu Divers | 213-456-2396 |
| 30 thru Sept. 3 | Anchor Shack | 415-825-4960 |
| | Adventure Sports | 408-548-3648 |
| Sept. 1-2-3 | Adventure Sports | 408-458-3648 |
| 4-5-6-7 | Any Water Sports | 408-244-4435 |
| 8 & 9 | Aloha Diving School | 818-343-6343 |
| 13 & 14 | San Diego U/W Photo Society | 619-277-6363 |
| 15-16-17 | Inter-Ocean Tours | 415-444-5833 |
| 20 & 21 | Aqua Adventures Unltd. | 818-342-4170 |
| 22 & 23 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 27-28-29 | Calif. Wreck Divers | 213-390-5171 |
| Oct. 2-3-4-5 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 6-7-8 | Adventure Sports | 408-458-3648 |
| 10-11-12 | Black Barts | 714-496-5891 |
| 13 & 14 | Flipper Dippers | 408-446-1908 |
| 17-18-19 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 20-21 | Anchor Shack | 415-825-4960 |
| 22 | Divers Corner | 213-927-1417 |
| 24-25-26 | Water Pro | 805-543-3483 |
| 27 & 28 | Stu's Scuba Tours Unltd. | 415-283-8343 |
| 29-30-31 | Lompoc Dive Club | 805-735-1593 |
| Nov. 1 & 2 | Bamboo Reef | 415-362-6694 |
| 3-4-5 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 7-8-9 | New England Divers | 415-434-3614 |
| 10-11-12 | Tom Campbell Group | 805-965-4951 |
| 14-15-16 | Marin Skin Diving | 415-479-4332 |
| 17-18-19 | Any Water Sports | 408-244-4435 |
| 21-22-23 | Adventures Sports | 408-458-3648 |
| 24 & 25 | Wet Pleasure | 408-984-5819 |
| 26 & 27 | Bob Widmann | 408-462-5409 |
| 28-29-30 | Stan's Skin Diving Shop | 408-998-0767 |
| Dec. 1 & 2 | Hughes & T.R.W. | 213-607-1005 |
| 3-4-5-6 | Cal. Academy of Sciences | 415-668-7376 |
| 7-8-9 | Finstad's Scubaventures | 408-476-5201 |
| 14-15-16 | Anchor Shack | 415-825-4960 |
| 20 & 21 | Discovery Charters | 818-790-2717 |
| 28-29-30 | Undersea Tours | 503-883-2016 |
| 31st thru Jan. 1, 1986 | Divers Corner | 213-927-1417 |

cliffs, is a good lobster spot. Depths reach 40 feet and the rocky bottom provides lots of hiding places for bugs. **Cavern Point** is a good spot for beginners with depths averaging 30-40 feet and dropping to 60.

SANTA ROSA

This is the second largest Channel Island. Almost 15 miles long and about 10 miles wide, it is about 30 miles from Santa Barbara. Santa Rosa and San Miguel are probably the least dived of all the Channel Islands. For this reason game is abundant. And, in some spots California's only true cowrie, the chestnut, seems to be everywhere.

In lobster season everyone's favorite spot is **Talcott Shoal**. This area is 20 square miles of ledges and rock piles. Depths range from nine feet to very deep. The high point is one and one-half miles offshore. Because of the weather, Talcott is often undivable. The wrecks of the **Aggi** and the **Golden Horn** are in this area.

East of Talcott and three-quarters of a mile offshore is **Rodes Reefs** with its ledges, rocks and big boulders. It goes down to 70 feet. **East Point** is a dive spot featuring a series of pinnacles one-half to two and one-half miles offshore. The depths range from 30 to 80, 45 to 90 and 60 to 140 feet. There are lots of scallops and game fish. Look for the beautiful purple and gold ringed top shell among the *Corynactis* anemones.

A favorite nighttime anchorage for multi-day trips is **Johnsons Lee**, on the south side of Santa Rosa. It has lots of kelp and depths ranging from 30 to 40 feet. This is a good, calm place for a night dive. On shore you can see the remnants of an abandoned Air Force Base.

SAN MIGUEL

Eight miles long and four miles wide, San Miguel is about 53 miles from Santa Barbara. It is the westernmost of the Channel Islands and its windswept shores are home to large numbers of seals and sea lions. Although each of the Channel Islands is unique, San Miguel's caliche forests have to be seen to be believed. These weird sandcasts were formed when living plants became covered with windblown sand.

Because San Miguel sits exposed to the elements, it is not always diveable. When you can dive it, it's a special treat. **Wilson** and **Richardson Rocks** are off Miguel's northern shore. These are beautiful pinnacles covered with anemones and other marine life. Because they are in the open ocean, they are often undivable and for experienced divers only.

Wycoff Ledge, one-quarter mile from the island's southern shore, is one of the prettiest of all California dive spots. This reef is about one-eighth mile long and the two high spots come to within 9 and 12 feet of the surface. The outside ledge drops to 120 feet. The sandy bottom of

DIVING IN KELP

Although novices may find kelp intimidating, experienced divers consider it a friend. It's something to hold onto in the surge or a current or if your weightbelt falls off and you suddenly become overly buoyant. It provides a home for marine life and is very photogenic.

Certain equipment adjustments can make kelp diving easier. Wear your knife on the inside of your leg. Keep all hoses and gauges close to your body with hose guides. Put the straps on your fins inside out so the ends are next to your foot. Wrap duct tape around the fin buckles so kelp strands don't catch on them. Kelp cuts easily and breaks relatively easily, too. If you get entangled, don't twirl, stay in one place; reach around and untangle yourself.

Surface kelp swimming is an art and when you have done it once you'll plan your next dive so you won't have to do it again! The secret is to crawl over the top, pushing the strands in front down and under you. This is a slow process. If you are a well equipped diver you'll have to stop frequently to remove those strands that catch on whatever isn't absolutely flat against your body.

TAKING GAME

Anyone over the age of 16 who wishes to take game in California waters must have a California sport fishing license. These are sold at sporting goods stores and the sport-fishing landings from which dive boats depart.

To take game in Channel Island waters you need an ocean fishing license. This will cost a California resident \$9 and is good from January 1 to January 1. Non-residents can get a five day ocean only license for \$9 or a 10 day ocean only license for \$14.75. Both residents and non-residents can get a one day ocean only license for \$4.25.

When you buy your fishing license, also pick up a copy of the Fish and Game Rules. These change each March. There are two versions. The one printed in color is the summary and not all regulations pertaining to divers are contained in it. The complete set is on newsprint in black and white.

For your information, scallops may be taken year-round; abalone season runs from March 16 to January 14; lobster season runs from the first Wednesday in October through the first Wednesday after March 15.

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Channel Islands

Simonton Cove is a good halibut spot. **Judith Rock** and **Cuyler Harbor** are popular dive spots. The latter is the area in which Juan Rodriques Cabrillo, discoverer of California, is supposed to have died in 1543.

THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS

The Southern Channel Islands include Santa Catalina, Santa Barbara, San Clemente and San Nicolas. Their waters are generally warmer, calmer and clearer than those of the Northern Islands. They get more diving pressure and game is not quite as abundant, nor as large as that found farther north. They are far from barren, however. Wide angle photography can be excellent and there are numerous macro subjects. The wrecks are diveable more often. Abalone, scallops, fish and lobster are there for those who like seafood dinners.

SANTA CATALINA

Santa Catalina is just 22 miles from San Pedro. Eighteen and one-half miles long and seven miles wide, it is the only Channel Island with a city, Avalon. Interesting and picturesque, it offers a variety of non-diving activities including glass-bottom boat rides and tours of the island (you'll see buffalo and wild boar). There are also tours of the Casino and it houses a museum (open daily in the summer, on weekends in the winter) that is worth a visit. Just off the Casino is an underwater park, the scene of many checkout dives year-round. Catalina Divers Supply offers air fills and rental gear both at the park and on the Pleasure Pier in town.

For sightseers and photographers, Catalina has much to offer. Non game animals are plentiful. Garibaldi and blue banded gobies seem to be everywhere. Many dive sites are perfect for novices. These include **Hen Rock**, the **Rock Quarry**, **Bird Rock**, **Isthmus Cove** (site of the only recompression chamber on any of the islands), **Emerald Bay**, **Parson's Landing**, **Arrow Point Cove** and **Iron Bound Cove**. Experienced divers will enjoy **Ship Rock**, **Eagle** and **Dismal Reefs** as well as the wreck of the **Valiant**, just off the Avalon Casino.

Farnsworth Bank is Catalina's most exciting and beautiful dive, but it is accessible only in good weather. Pinnacles here come to within 60 feet of the surface, dropping to 150. This is a dive for very experienced divers. Farnsworth is an underwater preserve so only animals listed in Fish and Game rules may be taken. The site is noted for its purple hydrocoral and other marine life is prolific as well.

SANTA BARBARA

Thirty-eight miles from San Pedro, Santa Barbara is the smallest of the

Channel Islands. About 640 acres in area, it is ringed with steep cliffs. Those wishing to visit the island must climb stairs rising 100 vertical feet. There's a self-guiding nature trail and limited camping is allowed with permit; you must bring all supplies with you and carry out all your trash. A park ranger is stationed on the island almost all year.

Sea lions and harbor seals are abundant at Santa Barbara and you have a good chance of seeing one or more almost anywhere your boat anchors.

Both novice and experienced divers will enjoy most Santa Barbara dive sites. One of the prettiest is **The Arch** and **Arch Reef**. On a calm day The Arch can be hard to find, but most of the time waves break over it. It is undiveable in rough weather. The reef leading to the

cent wreck of tug, which appears to have gone down in a 1983 winter storm. The deliberately scuttled **Butler** is in the middle of Northwest Harbor. Diveable only in very good weather is the **Gregory**, on the backside of the island.

Clemente has long been known as "the home of the shorts" or the "lobster nursery." It seems to have an incredibly large number of baby lobsters. Some crevices bristle with the antennae of these juveniles, who walk all over each other in their eagerness to get a look at you, looking at them. Amazingly, once they reach legal size they become considerably more reclusive. Other game is fairly common around the island. There are big fish and nice sized abs.

A very special dive site at Clemente is the **Coral Gardens**, also known as the



large arch is covered with anemones, purple coral and other colorful macro life. It drops straight down to 100 feet. There is about 40 feet of water under the Arch, which is about 30 feet wide. Most Santa Barbara dive sites are nameless but there are **Shag** and **Sutil Rocks**. A ledge off Sutil is a great macro spot.

Other dive sites well worth a visit include: **Brittle Star Reef**, **Halibut Hole**, **Three Sisters** and **Pete's Reef**

SAN CLEMENTE

Some 40 miles from San Pedro, San Clemente is owned and occupied by the Navy. It's about 18 miles long, but only four miles wide. Most of the time the island is quiet, but it isn't always. Occasionally the Navy's War Games are held out here. Then you'll see large gray ships on the horizon and there will be a lot of plane activity. San Clemente has a number of wrecks. Some went down accidentally, but many were victims of Navy target practice. The **Koka** ran aground East Point of Northwest Harbor more than 50 years ago. A short swim away is the re-

Seven Fathom Spot, northwest of Castle Rock. This reef has the beautiful purple hydrocoral, *Allopora californica*, growing all over it.

SAN NICOLAS

The most distant Channel Island is San Nicolas. It's 70 miles from the mainland. Eight miles long and three miles wide, it resembles a large sand dune. The diving around this Navy owned island is almost virgin in spots. Large sheephead follow divers around like packs of dogs. On a recent visit, large ocean whitefish were equally curious.

San Nick should only be dived by experienced divers. It can be quite rough. This is especially true of **The Boilers**. If you can't handle surge and white water stay out of this area. Veteran bug divers love it because big lobster (11 pounds and larger) are pulled from the rocks here every year. Most of San Nick's dive spots are unnamed, but try **Middle Light**, **Hell Hole**, and **Kenny's Reef**. When the weather is bad you'll probably end up in **Dutch Harbor**, the island's only semi-protected anchorage.